The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor according to the fundamental, bipartisan, and patriotic fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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VICTORY BUY WAR BONDS

Thru Payroll Savings

WHOLE NO. 1790 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JULY 31, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 31

LABOR, USA

Washington, D. C.—The fourth edition of the American Federationist of the Air, broadcast on the "Labor, USA" program over the American Broadcasting Company network, presented the following outstanding feature articles to supplement the news:

Equal Rights For Women

By BERNICE HEFFNER

Secretary, Am. Fed. of Government Employes

A few days ago the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives reported a report favoring the adoption of a constitutional amendment providing equality of rights for women under the law.

Now, at first glance, that is the sort of measure you would expect everyone except die-hard women-haters to approve. But closer examination shows that "equal rights under the law" is an entirely misleading phrase and that the proposed amendment, instead of freeing American women from unfair discriminatory laws would rob them of many important privileges and advantages they now enjoy.

In the first place, women are not equal to men. On the contrary, in many respects, both mental and physical, the average woman is far superior to the average man. In other respects, mental and physical, women, if not inferior, are at least a lot different than men.

Because of these natural and undeniable differences, women are not required to assume the same obligations as men. They are under no legal compulsion to become the breadwinner of the family. They don't have to pay alimony to divorced husbands. But the so-called "Equal Rights Amendment" would make women undertake such equal obligations.

Likewise, because the nation's women are its mothers, the laws in most states protect women against hazardous employment and sweatshop conditions dangerous to health. Yet the "Equal Rights Amendment" would provide a constitutional broom by which these safeguards could be swept out the window. The same thing is true of widows' pensions, useless to make men equal with women, Congress should appropriate funds for widowers' pensions.

Then why all this fuss about an "Equal Rights Amendment"? It was sponsored originally by a group of wealthy shirtwomen who were angered by some state laws which do not give women equal property rights and the privilege of serving on juries. They would be much better advised to seek to have these unfair laws corrected piecemeal instead of campaigning for a broad constitutional amendment which would certainly do more harm than good.

The American Federation of Labor, which has fought relentlessly through the years for true equal rights, such as equal pay for equal work, and for the adoption of welfare legislation for women, will steadfastly oppose the misnamed measure which poses as an "Equal Rights Amendment."

Florida Versus The United States

By JOSEPH A. PADWAY

Counsel for the A. F. of L.

The battle lines are now drawn between the State of Florida and the United States Government in a legal controversy which closely parallels the issues involved in the Civil War.

In this controversy the basic question is whether the laws of the nation or the laws of a state are supreme—whether the freedom granted to the American people by their constitution is nationwide or can be nullified by a state. The issue came to a head a few days ago when the National War Labor Board granted union security to American Potash and Chemical Corp. in four Florida cases despite a state constitutional amendment, adopted last November, which forbids any form of union-shop agreement between labor and management.

From a legal standpoint, the decision of the National War Labor Board is unchallengable. It held that its authority as a federal agency under the War Labor Disputes Act to settle labor disputes that might interfere with the war effort, and that this authority supersedes provisions of a state law or a state constitution. Any other ruling would mean a state to nullify policies of the United States Government essential to the successful prosecution of the war.

But even if there were no war, the State of Florida would not have a legal leg to stand on in this particular dispute. The National Labor Relations Act, a peacetime measure, gives legal sanction to the union shop and the so-called closed shop. This law has been upheld by the United States Supreme Court as constitutional. No single state has the right to repeal any of its provisions alone. Furthermore, the United States Constitution itself protects the freedom of contract and no state constitution can therefore deny to labor and management the right to enter into a union-shop or any other form of labor-shop agreement.

But aside from the legal aspects, which clearly uphold labor and the United States Government against the contentions of the State of Florida, I would like to say a word about the moral issues involved.

The attack against the union shop, and in several other states is indicative of a trend toward fascism. Organizations, preying upon prejudices, are seeking to reduce free American workers to a form of economic slavery. It is my opinion that the time has come for all liberty-loving citizens to realize that the activities of such antilabor organizations, will be smashed when it hits that great fortress of American freedom, the United States Supreme Court.

Plight of White Collar Workers

By BORIS SHISHKIN

A. F. of L. Economist

White collar workers, who have been the slowest to obtain wage advances to match increased living costs during the war, may be the first to feel the pinch if postwar unemployment becomes extensive. The reason is clear and simple—lack of organization.

Before we go into that, let's make a quick survey of the white collar field. It includes twenty million salaried employes, about two-out of five of the total number of American wage earners. Lumped in the white collar category are millions of office workers, professional workers, retail trade employes and government workers. There are many other smaller groups too numerous to specify.

Some of these jobs will disappear or shrink after the war. About a million federal employes will probably be dropped from Uncle Sam's payroll. In business offices, new machines will cut the number of office workers required. Even in retail trade you will see more and more mechanical salesmen —vending machines—take over the jobs of counter clerks.

As against this trend, there will be a demand for people looking for white collar jobs. Demobilization and cutbacks in war production will pour an avalanche of job-seekers into the white collar field.

What can be done about this dangerous situation?

First, employment expansion. There is plenty of room for it. For instance, American homes need more schools. Our public schools need more health and medical service. After the war the shortage of doctors, dentists, nurses and hospital personnel will amount to at least 600,000. Increased industrial production will require white collar workers to plan, direct and speed the greater flow of goods and provide better service to consumers.

Second, we need higher purchasing power to absorb increased industrial production. White collar workers, truly the forgotten men and women of our country, now suffer under pay standards only half of what organized workers in the skilled and factory fields have been able to obtain.

Third, the answer to point two—organization. Unless white collar workers join together to lift and defend their standards their incomes may be driven down to new lows in the postwar period.

As Howard Hicks, secretary of the Office Employes International Union of the AFL, says:

"Thousands of office workers are now joining our union for the first time and they are learning that collective bargaining, through their union, is the most effective means of improving their incomes and bettering their standard of living. Our union is prepared to help them meet the challenge of postwar upheavals."

SAY, LISTEN!

For the rest of this year, the AFL presents each Saturday evening at 6:45 P.M., EWT, over the nation-wide network of the American Broadcasting Company a radio news-magazine, featuring the latest news at home and abroad and special reports by expert commentators on important labor problems. This program is listed in the radio columns of your newspaper as "Labor-U.S.A." Our own subtitle for the program is "The American Federationist of the Air." Don't miss these bright, newsy broadcasts! Listen every Saturday night!

Victory Won By British Labor Party May Halt Reactionary Trend Here

Washington, D. C.—The landslide victory of the Labor Party in the British elections will have a profound effect upon the American scene, political observers in the nation's capital are convinced.

Enemies of labor, who hoped for a reactionary field day in this country after the war, were stopped in their tracks by the overwhelming repudiation by the British people of the Conservative Party's do-nothing policies. The backing of the British people for a postwar program, as evidenced by their votes, has strong significance for our country, AFL President William Green declared. He said:

"The Labor Party's victory in Great Britain must be interpreted as the outcome of the insistent desire of British working men, but rather, by the stand-ards and a greater degree of economic and social security.

"The same aspirations for a better life after the grim experiences of war are manifest in workers in our own country.

"The results of the British elections should not be viewed as a repudiation of the brilliant war leadership of Winston Churchill, but rather as a repudiation of the stand-pat domestic policies of the Conservative Party."

The British Labor Party is a completely separate and distinct organization from the British trade union movement, although it derives most of its votes from British workers in masses. The Labor Party includes among its leaders a heavy sprinkling of intellectuals, college professors, Socialists and liberals. The highest-ranking trade union leader in the new British government is Ernest Bevin, who was banned Foreign Secretary. Bevin, a forceful and militant trade unionist, is not regarded as a left-winger.

Among the changes expected to be advanced by the Labor government are higher wages, better working conditions and a far-reaching social security program for the common people of Britain.

If this program is put into effect and operates successfully, it is believed here that Congress will be forced by public opinion in America to enact many of the progressive measures, like the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Social Security Amendments, which it has thus far delayed acting upon. Likewise, reactionary legislative proposals, such as the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill, would be doomed.

Senators Urge Job Bill To Save Postwar America

Washington, D. C.—The United States must accept full employment as a national responsibility or face an upheaval that may end the free enterprise system, witnesses testified at the opening hearings before the Senate Banking and Currency on the "Full Employment Bill."

The measure was introduced last January and has since been sponsored by a group of liberal lawmakers from both parties. Only official witnesses will be heard at the present hearings, but in October labor leaders, industrial executives and farm representatives also will be given an opportunity to testify.

Senator Robert F. Wagner, committee chairman, urged favorable action by Congress on the bill in order to commit the nation to a full employment policy "in accordance with our traditions."

Sen. Joseph C. O'Mahoney said:

"Unless we are prepared to make plans to plan for a free economy, we are in grave danger of losing that free government."

Senator O'Mahoney told the committee that unemployment between 1929 and 1941 cost the nation dollars in lost income, dollars greater than the entire cost of the war; 175 billion dollars in wages; and 24 billion dollars in the net income of farmers.

Other witnesses called to testify included Senator James E. Murray, its original sponsor, and Senator Wayne B. Morse.

The bill would provide full employment help private business to expand in order to provide jobs for all willing and able to work and authorizes large public works investments by the government if private industry fails to provide the national employment.

Senator O'Mahoney called the measure a "bill for economic preparedness" and other witnesses warned that it is the only practical alternative to deficit spending or another WPA.

A Little Bit of Slavery

Washington, D. C.—AFL Secretary-Treasurer George Meany denounced the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill as a "vicious, antilabor" measure in an article published in the August issue of the American Federationist, excerpts from which follow:

By GEORGE MEANY

Secretary-Treasurer of the A. F. of L.

No nation dedicated to liberty, justice and freedom can afford even a little bit of slavery.

The right to strike is as sacred to organized labor as the right to make profits is to the industrialist, and for considerably more humane reasons. Without this right, labor is helpless, and organization a farce. Yet it is the object of the sponsors of the Ball-Burton-Ball bill to place in the hands of a government board the determination of when the right to strike can or cannot be exercised in respect to matters vital to the workers' welfare as the pay he is to receive, the hours he is to work and the conditions under which he is obliged to work.

Labor has wholeheartedly accepted a certain amount of government control and regulation during wartime as a contribution to the common cause of all. Wage rates have been frozen at an inadequate level in the face of ever-mounting living costs. Labor has failed to realize the individual production pay worker has risen constantly during the war. Thus, we find labor laying aside its agreed principle of compensation for production as a further contribution to the war effort. Despite these sacrifices, despite long cooperation with agencies of the War Labor Board in disposing of cases before it, and despite the unjust taking of wage rates by executive order, labor has maintained its no-strike pledge.

Yet during all this time when the country has been engaged in the most destructive struggle in history, we find labor's enemies striving, by every means at their disposal, to hamstring workers' organizations by restrictive legislation. Laws calling for rigid union regulation and elimination of the closed shop have been introduced and passed. Organized labor has been forced to fight for its future at the same time that it has been supplying our soldiers and the forces of our allies with the weapons of war.

The Hatch-Burton-Ball bill is a deliberate, considered attempt to hamper and prohibit legitimate trade union activity in America by restrictive government control. Let us not be fooled by any attempts on the part of self-styled liberals who may suggest acceptance by labor of amendments to the bill which would make it somewhat less vicious, on the theory that if we do not voluntarily accept it we will be compelled to accept something in the nature of the Hatch-Burton-Ball bill. There can be no compromise of the fundamental right to strike, which is the workers' only effective weapon against unscrupulous employers who refuse to grant reasonable wages and decent conditions of work.

Labor realizes that there is some potential advantage for them in government control of labor look to recent history before they attach any weight behind the Hatch-Burton-Ball bill.

What was the lot of workers in Germany, where trade unions were the first to fall before Nazi brutality? For workers, practical slavery. For employes, vicious control plus utter ruin for their business.

What was the lot of workers and employers in Italy after Mussolini took over and made the trains run on time? For workers, easier oil. For employers, easier oil.

And let the employer who likes the idea of government control for workers remind himself that in Russia, where there are no strikes and no free unions, there also are no employers.

HEROISM OF AFL WORKER WINS DSC DECORATION

Washington, D. C.—The War Department announced that a fearless, single-handed assault which was mainly responsible for breaking up a powerful German counterattack, won the Distinguished Service Cross for an AFL man, Staff Sergeant Clyde L. Choate, member of International Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers Union, Local No. 1520, Chicago.

Choate was a Field Artilleryman, with "C" Co., 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, when, October 24, 1944, a German Mark IV tank knocked out his destroyer and started a rampage. American Infantry positions, threatening the battalion command post. The sergeant dashed boldly through enemy automatic fire, seized a bazooka from an infantryman and stalked the enemy tank. Gliding right through the enemy infantry line, Choate approached the tank with a rocket, ran back to reload, this time attacking the tank from a distance of 10 feet. Firing at two of the fleeing tank crew, the persistent sergeant then buried a grenade into the tank. The 25-year-old hero is now stationed at Fort Sheridan, Ill., on temporary duty.

Wage Freeze on Way Out, NWLB To Change Its Rules

AFL Executive Council Meets in Chicago Aug. 6

Chicago.—The AFL Executive Council will draft a special report to the seven million members of the American Federation of Labor at its quarterly meeting which opens here Aug. 6.

The special report will deal with all the great national and international problems affecting the nation's workers, emphasizing the measures necessary to attain full employment after victory over Japan.

Because of the fact that there will be no annual AFL convention this year, due to wartime travel restrictions, the Executive Council will address its report directly to the membership and seek to obtain the widest possible circulation of it.

The AFL leaders believe that the record of labor's accomplishments during the past year and its policies for the future will serve as a unifying force and help to mobilize strong grass-roots support for the federation's postwar program.

As usual, the Executive Council will formulate policies and issue declarations at its meeting here on such outstanding issues as the urgent need for higher wage rates, social security legislation, more adequate unemployment compensation, speedier reconversion and the prompt removal of government controls over labor and business when victory comes.

Vast Unemployment, Business Crash, May Come With V-J Day, Senate Warns

Washington, D. C.—Large-scale unemployment resulting from reconversion will hit America should the war against Japan end soon and suddenly, the Senate War Investigating Committee warned the nation in its annual report.

The report was highly critical of the government's lack of preparation to meet postwar problems and was particularly condemned the slow pace of reconversion.

The committee's warning of wholesale unemployment ensuing after V-J Day included specific measures to help private business to expand in order to provide jobs for all willing and able to work and authorizes large public works investments by the government if private industry fails to provide the national employment.

Senator O'Mahoney called the measure a "bill for economic preparedness" and other witnesses warned that it is the only practical alternative to deficit spending or another WPA.

Highlights of the committee report, made public by Chairman James Mead, follow:

"Although progress is being made, reconversion has not proceeded as swiftly as it might have because of the cessation of hostilities in Europe. Because factors include delay in planning delay in securing materials and making cutbacks, lack of both raw and semi-finished materials and tools, insufficient information available for industry to make plans far enough in advance, and lack of manpower in some key places.

"There has not been sufficient help from the government to industries and business desiring to reconvert.

"The fact that we have escaped serious unemployment up to this time should not mislead us into the belief that all is well.

"Should the war in the Pacific end quickly it will be largely suppressed and to overcome our domestic problems. Reconversion will not have progressed far enough to absorb the manpower which will suddenly be released. Government work programs will not have been established. Unemployment on a large scale will ensue. Once this occurs, it creates an inertia which is very difficult to overcome and will seriously interfere with achieving prosperity.

"The anticipated schedule of cutbacks to war-production programs to be put in effect at the end of the war were announced late and too close to the end of the war in Europe. They have been slow in being consummated with the resultant delay in releasing facilities and materials.

"We must now utilize and divert into peacetime channels our productive capacity that is not needed for our military production. Our first responsibility in the winding of the war as soon and completely as possible. For that reason there should be no diversion of productive capacity of manpower that would conflict with this program. On the other hand, the war production and military manpower needs should be reviewed with the utmost care from the point of view of the earliest possible relief of bottlenecks in the reconversion of industry to civilian purposes. There should be the most careful consideration given to what the continued efforts of the war agencies concentrated on, the release now from the armed forces of a facility or of have whose services are essential to early reconversion of industry. Small numbers of men released now for this purpose would make possible sooner the employment of large numbers of workers who are laboring, transportation, coal mining, cotton textiles, and, to a limited but important extent, steel. War production programs should be cut back as far as possible, with more advance notice to industry than in the past.

"In order to direct workers to the places of jobs will be available and to provide the types of workers needed when industry is short of labor, accurate information must be gathered and made available to workers and employers throughout the country.

"Surpluses must be declared and disposed more expeditiously and with a more definitely coordinated policy concerning the objectives to be attained in this condition.

"Attention must be given to the conservation of the country's resources to the accumulation of stock piles of strategic materials, and to technological research."

Maternity and Child Health Care Provided In Bill Backed By AFL

Washington, D. C.—A 10-year program of expanded federal-state maternity and child health services, available to all women and children who wish to use them, was proposed in a bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Claude Pepper and nine other Senators including Walsh, Thomas (Utah), Hill, Chavez, Tunnell, Guffey, La Follette and Morse. The AFL originally sponsored and strongly supports this program.

Under the Pepper-Thomas bill, which would cost $1,000,000 for the first year, would provide complete maternity care, including prenatal and postnatal service, to all mothers "who elect to participate in the benefits of the bill." It would also provide preventive, curative and welfare services for children in home, clinic, and school, and would expand medical programs for crippled and other physically handicapped children as well as mental hygiene programs designed to curb delinquency. The federal administrative agency would be the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor.

In introducing the bill, Senator Pepper said:

"In my opinion, passage of this measure would result in saving the lives of many of the 7,000 mothers who die in childbirth, and of many of the 118,000 children who die before reaching the age of 1 year. In considering this bill Congress has to keep one basic question in mind. Do we as a nation intend to provide an opportunity for every child to live or what the family income is, with an opportunity to get modern, scientific maternity care, and do we intend to see that every child, regardless of who his parents are or where he happens to be born, has a chance to receive good health care, or shall we remain content with present conditions under which some mothers and babies get the best care available anywhere in the world while others get little or no skilled medical attention?"

MEAT CUTTERS SEND OFFICIALS TO COLLEGE

Chicago.—The Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union (AFL) will send 200 organizers to college for brief courses in labor economics, it was announced here. In addition the union is sending two of its vice presidents, Harry Pool, of Philadelphia, and Marvin W. Hook, of St. Louis, to Harvard University's Labor School this autumn for the full one-year course.

Patrick E. Gorman, secretary-treasurer of the union, said the experiment was adopted because labor representatives in the postwar era who have no economic training "will be unable and unworthy to represent labor."

Voluntary Pay Boosts Okay If No Price Increase Results, Board Says

Washington, D. C.—The national wage freeze is on the way out!

This good news for American workers was obtained exclusively by the AFL Weekly News Service just before this edition went to press.

It was learned that the public members of the National War Labor Board have approved a new wage policy to be put into effect during the "partial reconversion" period now under way.

This new policy provides:

1—That voluntary wage rate increases arrived at through collective bargaining will be permitted even though they extend beyond the limits of the Little Steel formula whenever the employer certifies he will not seek or require corresponding increases in prices.

2—That the NWLB be given authority to order wage rate boosts above the formula in exceptional cases, even if higher price ceilings are required, whenever downgrading, loss of incentive pay and reduction of overtime earnings cause real hardship to workers and impair their living standards.

These WLB recommendations will be submitted to the Economic Stabilization Director Davis in the next few days. It is expected he will ask President Truman to issue an executive order to put the new policy into effect.

Spokesmen for the labor representatives on the National War Labor Board declined to comment at this time on the recommendations of the public members. It was learned, however, that they regard the recommendations as an important step forward, although not entirely fulfilling labor's demands for relief from the wage freeze.

Apparently, the public members of the NWLB have not yet supported complete abandonment of the Little Steel formula but partial relaxations from its rigid limits to meet conditions facing labor and industry during the reconversion period.

Until now the board has refused to allow voluntary increases in wage rates beyond the Little Steel formula regardless of whether such adjustments could be made without increasing the cost of living or employer's profit. The board applied these limitations on the theory that such pay increases might indirectly cause inflation by allowing competitive bidding for labor at a time of manpower shortages and by expanding consumer purchasing power when consumer goods were scarce.

But during reconversion, increases in labor supply and in production of consumer goods will take place. So the former arguments for keeping a tight lid on voluntary wage increases now lose their validity. Furthermore, increases in wage rates would not increase the cost of workers but would compensate them for losses in take-home pay that have occurred since V-E Day.

The public members of the NWLB feel that the widest possible resumption of free collective bargaining would be a healthy thing for the nation right now. First, it will halt the tendency to look to the government for decisions which, under the free enterprise system, should be made by labor and management to re-establish an orderly relationship between wages to meet the nation's postwar needs.

In dealing with exceptional hardship cases, the public members of the NWLB are asking the President to give them a free hand, instead of tying his hands with hard-and-fast regulations. They also seek more flexible authority in administering the "bracket" system of wage interpretations, on the ground that differing situations in different plants and industries cannot be precisely anticipated or defined in advance.

AFL HERO, NOW DEAD, AWARDED HIGHEST HONOR

Washington, D. C.—Private First Class Carl V. Sheridan of Baltimore, member of Retail Clerks International Protective Association, Local No. 2215-A (AFL), lies in a hero's grave in Europe. The Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award, has been presented to his father, Charles E. Sheridan, in recognition of his son's final gallant stand in blasting an opening into an ancient castle which was strongly defended by German paratroopers.

The 20-year-old infantryman enlisted in the army on May 7, 1943, and as a member of the 47th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, took part in the St. Lo breakthrough and the fighting through the Argentan sector. He shared in the conquest of his division through Belgium and fought in western Germany from September 14 until his death.